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THE  
KINGDOM OF GOD:  
ITS  
Constitution and Progress.

A DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BY APPOINTMENT

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BY THE

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# THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

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THY KINGDOM COME.

MATT. vi. 10.

LONGINUS, in his treatise upon the sublime, quotes, as a magnificent specimen of sublimity, that utterance of God in the Mosaic record of the creation, "Let there be light, and there was light!" And its splendour does eclipse all mere human utterances. It describes, with a succinctness and a grandeur all divine, that magnificent work of the Spirit of God, by which "He hath garnished the heavens;" that glorious result, over which the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." But sublime as it is, it transcends not the sentence announced as the basis of this discourse. Read by the eye of sense, and judged by that taste, whose field is the beauty and sublimity of earth, there may seem to be no comparison. But read by the eye of *faith*, and judged by that taste which embraces, in its far ranging estimate, both matter and mind—both the things which are seen and are *temporal*, and the things which are not seen, and are *eternal*—the utterance of Jesus, as he teaches his disciples how to pray, transcends, in sublimity, the record of Moses, as he describes the birth of worlds from the womb of night. The mandate, "let there be light," sent *material glory* streaming from suns, and moons, and stars, and systems; it garnished the heavens, and bathed the earth in splendour. But what had all that splendour profited, if there had been no living, loving, intelligent beings to behold and enjoy the glory? Around the summit of Mont Blanc the sunbeams play in almost tropical brilliance; and the brightness of his ice-crowned apex is more than mortal vision can endure. But amid all that glory, death reigns in glittering solitude! Nor bird, nor beast, nor man,

nor flower, nor blade of grass, can live in that home of eternal snow. Light! Ah! what would it be without *life* and *love*? “Let there be light” might have poured material splendour upon a universe bright and barren as the bald summit of Mont Blanc. But the answered prayer, “Thy kingdom come,” warms the universe to *life*, and makes it throb with *love*. *Light*, like the Deist’s or the Unitarian’s God, might beam for ever upon a world of death and solitude. *Light, life, and love*, is the triune emanation from a triune God, that *peoples* the universe, and makes its people blessed! Over *such* a universe does the kingdom of God extend; to promote its welfare and proclaim his own glory are the great objects of his reign.

The prayer, “Thy kingdom come,” looks, then, to results far more magnificent than did the creation of material things. If over the one “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; over the other, angels and principalities, and powers, and men shall eternally exult, ascribing “glory to God in the *highest*, on earth peace, good-will to men!” Such a theme cannot be inapposite to the present occasion, and in attempting a discussion of it, we invite attention to

#### I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

#### II. THE OBLIGATION TO PRAY AND LABOUR FOR ITS COMING.

I. What is the kingdom, for the success of which we are taught to pray? In the largest sense, it is the universal reign of the King of Heaven. If the Scriptures were silent upon the subject, it could now be demonstrated to be an astronomical necessity, that the systems of worlds, which occupy the boundless fields of space, should all form but *one* stupendous system, under the control of *one* omnipresent and almighty Governor. For, if it were not so, if these countless worlds were independent of each other, controlled by different governors and by different laws, what is to hinder the most disastrous collisions? Why may not world dash against world, and sun rush blazing to the embrace of sun; men and angels perish in the catastrophe, and night and chaos resume their reign? Nothing prevents it but the wisdom, goodness, and power of Him “whose kingdom ruleth over all.” If there be no such



supreme, all-controlling power, no "LORD OF HOSTS!" then we know not the moment when the direst disasters may occur. But if there be a "Lord of hosts," who "doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, whose hand none can stay," then beneath his sway all is safe—all may rejoice!

In its largest sense, then, the kingdom of God is his *universal* dominion. But although universal, that dominion is also particular; extending to each system and each world; and as each, doubtless, has its peculiarities of structure, climate, inhabitants, and moral condition, he adapts his administration to the peculiarities of each; so as in a most wise, good, and mighty way to govern and direct it to the accomplishment of its grand mission, in his stupendous universal scheme. The kingdom of God, as established in any one of the worlds, is his mode of governing that world and its inhabitants. The kingdom of God in *our* world, is his reign over it, including the *subjects* of his government, and the *modes* and *means* of administration. And as this is the province of his dominion with which we have chiefly to do, it becomes us diligently to study the constitution and laws of his kingdom on earth, and the objects of its inauguration.

God governs the globe, and its varied physical appliances, by laws adapted thereto, which men have called the laws of nature. But, although this department of God's kingdom is connected with, and subservient to, his moral government of rational beings, our present plan admits of no delay upon his physical kingdom, and we proceed at once to the consideration of that kingdom specially designated in our text.

If man had never rebelled against God, his kingdom in this world had worn a very different aspect from what it now presents. In its grand principles and aims it would have been the same. It would have been a reign of righteousness, for in every world "a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom," and it would have secured blessedness for man, and glory to God. But as man rebelled, and attempted to wrest the world from the dominion of its Creator, it became necessary to adopt the *mode* of government to a world and a race in a state of revolt. Instead of being a peaceful reign over

willing and unresisting subjects, it became a kingdom of *conquest—aggressive*—and adapted to subdue and reclaim rebels, reconcile the submissive to their rightful sovereign, and con-  
dignly punish the persistently rebellious. It was competent to a sovereign God to give any character to his kingdom on earth, that might accord with “the good pleasure of his will.” He might have made it a reign of stern and simple *justice*—a reign of vengeance unsoftened by mercy. He might have left our world to become what sin unchecked will make any world—A HELL! He was not *bound* to be merciful—mercy is *free*, not *obligatory*. But, adored be his name, instead of extending over our fallen race such a kingdom as he extends over fallen angels—a kingdom of wrath, a reign of *terror*—he proffers us a kingdom of *love* and *mercy*, a reign of grace adapted to save the fallen! “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life!” He sent his Son to redeem, and conquer the world, to re-establish his dominion in it, to gather myriads of repentant rebels around his throne, and make them the willing, loyal, and happy subjects of his eternal government.

The kingdom of God on earth is a reign of grace—a kingdom of light, and life, and love. It is a kingdom of *conquest*; but “the weapons of its warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.” It is a kingdom of spotless *righteousness*; it exacts obedience to its laws to the utmost jot and tittle; but the gracious King has, as their *surety*, and in their nature, perfectly obeyed the law which his fallen subjects had failed to obey. It is a kingdom of unbending *justice*; its monarch “will by no means clear the guilty.” He demands full satisfaction to the penal sanctions of law; but he himself hath “borne their sins in his own body on the tree.” It is a kingdom of *holiness*, whose laws require perfect purity of heart and life, and although its subjects are by nature unholy, it is of the very nature of this kingdom to purify their hearts. It is a kingdom of *peace*, for although it meets with opposition, and is itself a scheme of conquest, its victories are won by love, and result in eternal peace. It is a kingdom of *love*. It *conquers* by love, it *reigns* by love, and love is at once the



*origin* and the *end* of its administration. It originated in the eternal love of God; by a display of that love, in the wondrous death of the Crucified, it conquers its enemies, and makes them friends. It sheds abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given to them, the love of God. That love, apprehended by faith, kindles theirs, and becomes the impulse of a new life. In bands of love they are sweetly drawn to God and to duty; the reign of love is established in their hearts, and under it they find safety and blessedness.

The constitution, and laws, and ordinances of the kingdom of God are all recorded in the holy Scriptures, and thence must we draw all our information concerning the origin, nature, and destiny of that kingdom.

There is a reign of God on earth distinguishable from the kingdom specially meant in our text, and we may as well here draw the distinction. Since the fall, it has pleased God to govern men upon two distinct, and to some extent, antagonistic, systems. The one adapted to man's fallen nature; the other to that nature renewed and partially or fully restored to its original uprightness. The one system appeals to men's *fears*, and employs physical *force*; the other appeals to *love*, and employs *moral power*. The one is called, in the Bible, (Rom. viii. 15,) "the spirit of bondage to fear," the other "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." The one is a reign of terror, the other a paternal rule. The one employs *force*, *penalty*, the other *grace* and *love*. The one is a government of *force*, the other of *freedom*. The one is administered through the instrumentality of the kingdoms of this world; the other through "a kingdom not of this world." The one gives rise to the state and civil government, the other is the RELIGION and the CHURCH of the living God. The one, adapted to a world of rebels, is a *temporary expedient*; the other adapted to a redeemed and rising world, is an *eternal establishment*.

These two systems, though diverse, are yet coöperative. They govern the same subjects, but by different principles and motives, and each must act *independently* of the other. The system of government by moral and spiritual power, will, as it extends, gradually diminish the range of the other system. Before its silent, but resistless influence, despotic forms will

crumble. It will finally sweep all absolutism from the earth. It will steadily liberalize other forms of civil government, rendering them more and more free, by inculcating the spirit of obedience, and thus forestalling the necessity for force, until it has reduced them to a condition light as the chaff of the threshing-floor; the winds of heaven will blow it away; perfect love will cast out fear, and the necessity of the government of fear; Christianity, as a "perfect law of liberty," shall be supreme, and proclamation shall be made, that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

These systems, and this their destiny, were symbolized respectively, by the colossal image, and by the stone cut out of the mountain, beheld in the dream of the Babylonish king, and interpreted by Daniel. The image, with its vast proportions, its golden head, and its other parts of silver, and brass, and iron, and clay, symbolizes the governments of *force*—the empires, kingdoms, and other forms of governing men by the sword, the prison, and the gibbet. The stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, small at first, but steadily growing, till it fills the whole earth, symbolizes God's government by LOVE, his spiritual kingdom—Christianity. And as the stone broke the image and its component parts into pieces, so that they "became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the winds carried them away, and *no place was found for them*," whilst the stone itself became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth, so shall God's spiritual kingdom—a kingdom of light, and love, and liberty—demolish all thrones of darkness and of terror, and *grow* until it fills the world!

In describing his spiritual government on earth, the great King himself was very explicit in the declaration, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and in striving to ascertain its functions, and its mission, we must carefully distinguish it from the civil government. The State governs men by *force* and *fear*, but Christ his Church by *love*. The former *compels*, the latter *teaches* and *persuades*. The one wields a sword of *steel*, the other "the sword of the *spirit*, which is the *word of God*." The weapons of the one are *carnal*, those of the other *spiritual*, but "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds."



Christianity aims, by purifying the fountains of society, to furnish the true elements, and lay an enduring foundation of good government. She begins with the individual *heart*, and with the *home*—the *family*, which is the fountain of society. She instils high and holy principles. She quietly prepares and polishes the living stones; and of the materials thus prepared, a temple spontaneously rises, in chaste and magnificent proportions, to the glory of the great Architect, and for the shelter of the nations. Such is the function of Christianity—such is the mission of the Church, and from this mission she should never be diverted.

But if religion and the Church should be restricted to their appropriate sphere, so ought civil government. Her only mission is *protection from force by force*. The only weapon placed in her hands, by divine authority, is the sword—(Rom. xiii.) The only motive to which she may appeal is *fear*. Civil government is, strictly, a stranger to *moral suasion*. The moment she attempts it, she usurps a spiritual prerogative, and turns church. If her magistrates resort to moral means for accomplishing the ends of justice, (except in the single case of the tender of the oath,) they do it as men and Christians, not as civil rulers. As Christians and neighbours, they may persuade men to do right, but as *magistrates*, their function is compulsion—their argument, the *sword*. Now, your speaker solemnly believes, that most of the disasters that have befallen society, and which still imperil free social institutions, have sprung from a failure to limit the kingdom of God—the *Church* on the one hand, and the State on the other, each to her heaven-appointed province. Even in this land there is a confounding of the functions of the two; and usually the State has been the usurper, though *sometimes* efforts are made to lead the Church to interfere with matters strictly civil. Civil government is too often transformed into a church, a school, or a charitable or moral reform society, instead of being used simply as an agency for protecting rights and avenging wrongs by force; and the result is a mixing up of temporal and spiritual functions, an absurd interference with the prerogatives of the family and the church, a ruinous excess of legislation, and increase of public burdens.

The perils that this hour beset this glorious Union and our free institutions, spring from this very blunder. The doctrine that the religious principle of *benevolence*, that reigns in the hearts of individuals and in the bosom of the Church, may lawfully warm the heart of the State, and become the controlling impulse of civil legislation and national action, is a child born of the unhappy wedlock of Church and State. It was a monster birth, and is a most mischievous bantling. The principle of Christian charity never *ought* to become the impulse of government action. The State, like the corporations she creates, "*hath no soul.*" Her cold and mail-clad bosom never was designed to grow warm with the glow of charity, nor to feel the throbbings of compassion. The prince of patriots understood the true theory of civil power when he declared, in his farewell address, that "self interest is its only motive, and that it is folly to calculate upon *favour* from nation to nation." And it is when we lose sight of this, and mingling religion and politics, join together what God has put asunder, that we are tempted to revive the spirit of the Crusades, and *force* men to be *free*. Men, in their amiable zeal for reform, forget that civil government is designed only for *defence*, not for *aggression*. They forget that, in civil government, *ballots* are *bayonets*—that what the *majority votes*, the *sword* must *achieve*; and that to propagate *opinions* by the *sword*, is simply *persecution*. They forget that, in propagating opinions, *force* and *freedom* are antagonistic ideas. They perceive not the absurdity of *forcing* men to be *free*. They forget that sound moral and spiritual principles, in the hearts and homes of the people, are the only foundation of rational, regulated liberty; and that, until the foundation be laid, the glorious fabric cannot rise. And they forget that civil government is not the agency for disseminating such principles. That is the mission of the kingdom of our God. The laws of the kingdom of God *forbid* one sovereign nation or commonwealth to interfere in the internal police of another. Christianity *forbids* the propagation of *opinion* by the *sword*; and, I repeat it, in civil government, *suffrage* and the *sword* are *inseparable*. It is the mission of the kingdom for whose coming we pray in the text, to meliorate the *moral* and



*social* condition of men by improving their *spiritual* condition. Working silently, unostentatiously, but steadily, like the leaven in the meal, this kingdom will spread—assimilating mass after mass of the world's population to its own blessed and holy principles, until the whole lump is pervaded by the leaven of holiness and freedom.

Let us now rapidly inspect the constitution and laws of this kingdom.

We have said that they are recorded in the Holy Scriptures; and they are all comprised in that system usually called the GOSPEL, or the REMEDIAL LAW. That system of facts, doctrines, and ordinances which God has instituted as the instrumentality by which rebels of mankind are subdued to himself, reconciled, pardoned, justified, sanctified, governed on earth and fitted for heaven. In other words, the Christian religion and the Christian Church constitute the kingdom of God on earth. It is a perfect kingdom, so far as relates to the administrative qualifications of the King, the plan and principles of government, and its adaptation to the ends to be accomplished. But, like everything else that man has to deal with, it has been imperfectly studied, dimly understood, and but partially applied, even by those who profess to have received it. Not that there is any lack of clearness in the statements of the Holy Book, nor any unwillingness in the Holy Spirit to unfold the truth, but on account of the blindness of men's minds, and the perversity of their hearts. Men are slow to *understand*, and still slower to *receive* the true constitutional principles of the kingdom of God. And no wonder; "because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," till it is created anew. It is not to be expected that such a mind will understand or approve a government which it hates. Every man is born an enemy to God, to the doctrine of his sovereignty, and to the kindred doctrines of grace as elaborated by Paul, and defended by Augustin; and although a clear head may be logically convinced of their truth, a *converted heart* is a pre-requisite to their cordial reception. No wonder, then, that these pure principles of the kingdom meet with resistance, stern and steadfast, from unconverted men;

and from converted men, whose pride of intellect has not been crucified, and whose logic is an effort of the old rather than of the new man. But the very fact is an argument in their favour. The doctrine that does *not* rouse the enmity of the carnal mind is *probably* not of God. The system that is *popular* with the unconverted masses, affords, in the very fact, presumptive proof that it is a *human*, not a *divine* system.

After this statement, there will be no surprise created by the frank avowal that, in your speaker's opinion, the standards of the Presbyterian Churches comprise the most fair, full, logical, and scriptural exhibition of the constitution, laws, and ordinances of the kingdom of God, that has ever been embodied in uninspired language. And in speaking of the kingdom of God, I will be understood as referring to that system of grace and government which this Church believes to be taught in the Scriptures. Not that we deny that Christian societies, holding views not entirely coincident with our own, are true Churches of Christ, and component parts of his kingdom. Far be it from us. We do not unchurch them because their views of doctrine and order may somewhat vary from our own. A man may be a true patriot, and a good citizen, whose views of the constitution of his country are not perfectly sound, nor thorough; and so a man may be a true Christian, and a Church a Christian Church, whose views of the constitution and order of the kingdom of God are not as full, clear, and orthodox as they ought to be. But, whilst we admit this, we insist, that the more perfectly the kingdom is understood, and its laws and ordinances received and observed, the more effective will it be in promoting God's glory and man's salvation.

*Theory*, if it be valuable, is best illustrated by *practice*. The principles of government are most effectively exhibited in the details of administration, and perhaps the best method of setting forth the *principles* of the kingdom of God is to describe their *practical application*, in the process of subduing a rebel, and making him a willing and obedient subject of that kingdom. It is a spiritual kingdom, which renews and controls the *heart*, out of which are the issues of life. It begins *in the soul*, and in its normal *outgrowth* affects and forms the life of the individual, and of society. *How* is this kingdom first



established in the mind of man? *How* does a rebel become a willing subject of a kingdom, against which his carnal mind is enmity? And *how* is the reign of God maintained, and perfected in the soul? Answers to these questions will embody an exhibit of the constitution of God's kingdom amongst men.

And in answer to the question, How is the reign of God first begun in the rebel's heart? we say: it is by the *operation of the Spirit of God, working in the spirit of man*, FAITH IN A FACT. Around that fact, it is true, cluster all the glorious doctrines and laws that form the very constitution of the kingdom; but the *primal instrument* by which the man is transformed from a rebel into an obedient subject, is *belief of a fact*. The fact, to be believed, is the gloriously awful central fact of the gospel history, which is constantly commemorated in the Christian eucharist—that the Lord of glory died for the sins of men—that God “loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” The soul that *truly* believes this fact, cannot but love God. It is a believing view of Christ crucified that completes the demonstration to our hearts that God indeed loves us; and “we love him because he first loved us.” Faith's view of the cross, and reception of the crucified, slays our enmity to God, kindles love to him, and awakens in our souls abhorrence of sin, as the cause of a Saviour's death. The very same *act of faith*, that lays hold of Christ's atoning merit, and results in our pardon and justification, “worketh by love, and purifieth the heart.” True love to God, once kindled in a human heart, the kingdom of heaven is therein established, for that kingdom is a reign of love—“Love is the fulfilling of its laws.” Love, once awakened, longs for fuller knowledge of the object beloved; the perfections of God are studied, his laws are pondered, and from loving God with the love of *gratitude*, the believer advances to the love of *complacency*. He delights in God, and in the law of God, after the inward man; and his love of gratitude and complacency *seeks expression* in glad and free obedience to the laws of the kingdom; he becomes a cheerful and happy subject of Heaven's King, a free citizen of the commonwealth of Israel. The reign of God is established in his *heart*. Its laws are written there. He loves the *right*, he hates the *wrong*, and sweetly con-

strained by love to Christ, and love to men, he performs the duties, and enjoys the franchises of a citizen of the kingdom of God.

When the kingdom of God is thus begun in a believer's heart, it will also be set up in his *home*, and will extend to the other inmates of that home. Through the instrumentality of one convert, it is extended to others; and from heart to heart, and from home to home, and from city to city, and from land to land, it has extended, and shall extend, by this process, until

“Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
'Till moons shall wax and wane no more!”

If we have rightly described the believer as a subject of the kingdom, then have we a description of the entire body of that kingdom, for of such it is composed. And if we have truthfully described the *process* by which that kingdom is established in a human heart, and extended amongst men, then have we also a clew to guide us in the explication of the great principles of that kingdom.

If faith in the fact that God gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins, is the instrument of our reconciliation to God, of our justification, and of the establishment of his reign in our hearts; and if faith in Christ is the instrument of *perpetuating* that reign, then are the doctrines involved in the plan of justification by faith, substantially the constitution of the kingdom. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and the very facts and doctrines which are the *objects* of a justifying faith—the *things believed*—constitute the *system* of government, and furnish the *principles* of administration of the kingdom of heaven. Like Paul, every subject of that kingdom “lives the life that he lives in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God,” i. e. is governed, in all his feelings and conduct, by the principles and motives of the Christian faith.

The doctrine, then, which is *fundamental* in the scheme of government, called the kingdom of God, is the one which Luther declared to be the test of a standing or a falling church,



the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH in the merits and intercession of Messiah! Where that doctrine is *truly* and *practically* believed, in a heart, or a home, or a community, *there* the kingdom of God is established, and all the principles necessary to its progressive administration are put into the minds of the people. The *process of justification by faith*, is the process by which a rebellious son of fallen Adam ceases to be a rebel against God's kingdom, and becomes a subject of it, and *in the very things believed* are found *all* the instrumental elements both of *salvation* and of *good government*. And it is by the *practical operation* of this faith, upon the hearts and lives of men, that Christ administers his mediatorial kingdom.

That the plan of justification by faith in the vicarious obedience and death of Christ, is the only plan of salvation, is so generally conceded, that I shall not stop to fortify the position. That the facts and doctrines pertaining to that plan, and which the truly justified believe, have an innate tendency in the *direction* of salvation, by producing love to God and hatred to sin, has already been proven; and that holiness and freedom are produced in men by the power of the Spirit, through belief of the truth, is but a corollary from the same proposition; whilst it is abundantly asserted in the holy word, "Sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth"—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you *free*." The true believer of the facts and doctrines of the gospel, in the very process of *becoming a believer*, is so changed and taught that he loves God; his love becomes the motive of a new and cheerful obedience; he delights in the law, and is free and happy in obeying. Christ reigns in, and rules over him. This is the kingdom of God in *his heart*, and its natural and normal *out-growth* produces free and happy external obedience. The man is free from guilt, free from the slavery of sin, free to do right. In the highest sense he is a free-man; for

"He is a freeman whom the truth makes free."

But not only is *personal salvation*—freedom from sin and its consequences—the *result* of a spiritual belief of the facts and doctrines of the kingdom of God; *religious liberty*, in its true

spirit and *normal forms*, is also its legitimate and blessed fruit. And not only so, but the *true principles* and the *best forms* of *social freedom* are derived from the same divine source. The very things to be believed in order to salvation, contain the seeds of *good government*, *social peace* and *prosperity*, and *civil liberty*. We have already shown that the very process by which a man is made a true Christian, makes him in the highest sense a freeman. And how sublimely simple, yet how gloriously efficient the process! "The truth makes free;" the truth embodied in the plan of justification by faith, of which Messiah's death is the central fact. Truth beaming from the Godhead, reflected from the cross, flinging a rainbow round about the throne. Truth revealing God, and the things of God to man—guiding man, the wanderer, back to God! Truth showing *sin* to be as *impolitic* as it is *wicked*, and *holiness* to be as beneficent and beautiful as it is reasonable and right. Truth that emancipates the understanding, the affections, the conscience, the motives, the judgment, the will, the life, the whole man. Truth that makes men to know duty, to love it, to *do it freely*! That teaches them to understand and maintain their own rights, and to respect the rights of others; that writes upon the *heart* in letters of light and love, that golden utterance of Jesus, "as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Thus do the precepts of this blessed kingdom pour upon the human heart, and diffuse through society the very spirit of true regulated liberty.

Now, a commonwealth, composed wholly or largely of citizens thus qualified, must be free and prosperous—its people are baptized with the very spirit of liberty.

But not only does the Calvinistic interpretation of the constitution of the kingdom of God imbue the minds of men with the true spirit of liberty, but its natural and normal *outgrowth* produces the FORMS of *free, well-balanced, representative government*. *Presbytery*—i. e. representative government—is the *normal development* of the Calvinistic scheme of the doctrines of salvation. As the germ of the oak reposes in the acorn, so does presbytery repose in the Calvinistic creed; and as surely as the normal development of that germ produces the oak, so surely will the spontaneous outgrowth of the true



doctrine of justification by faith result in republican representative government. All the elements of that form of government *repose in the bosom of that creed*. Fully to illustrate this position would require more time than we can now claim; we can only state a few heads of thought.

The Calvinistic creed embraces the great ideas of *covenant union, vicarious or representative agency, imputation and accountability*; and these are essential elements of all government. Without them no society could exist for a day. But even with them, no government can be free without another social element, furnished only by a pure Christianity. We mean *faith*, by the presence or absence of which, all the other elements of a social system are modified. Where *faith* is introduced, it imparts life and liberty to all the other elements of government. Faith is the voluntary trust reposed by a constituent in a representative which he has freely chosen; and a relying upon him for the accomplishment of the business entrusted to his agency. This is the element which makes all the difference between thralldom and freedom, between despotism and regulated liberty, in social economy. The autocrat is the *representative* of the subjects he governs. They are bound, under the law of nations, by his acts; but there was no *faith*, no enlightened *choice*, in the mode of constituting the representative relation; and hence they are not governed upon principles of liberty. Where a people, under a social covenant, do, in an enlightened manner, administer government through representatives of their own choice, they are free; their government is republican. But where they are deprived of suffrage, and have not the privilege of choosing agents of government in whom they have *faith*, they are not free. Here are all the elements of representative government—*federal social union—vicarious agency or representation—imputation*, or the responsibility of the client or constituent for the act of his representative—and suffrage, choice, *faith*, the vital spirit of the whole. And whence came they? From the Calvinistic creed as found in the Bible! There primitively, there *only* are they found. And when that creed warns men to flee from a covenant of works, in which faith was not an element, to a covenant of grace, in which faith is

the all-pervading doctrine, it teaches them to be jealous of the *manner* of constituting the representative relation; it sheds upon them the very spirit of LIBERTY. And when that creed urges them to choose, as their representative in the court of heaven, their Advocate with the Father, the immaculate Immanuel, the perfect Jesus, it imparts a lesson which freemen should never forget—to choose, as agents in earthly government, representatives worthy of their trust—men in whom they can have *faith*.

*Presbytery*—i. e. federative representative government—is the normal development, in the external forms of society, of the pure doctrines of the kingdom of God. And history demonstrates that no other form can naturally spring from the Calvinistic creed; for although repeated attempts have been made to unite it with other forms, no such attempt has succeeded. In the English Reformation an attempt was made to imprison this free faith within the walls of a prelatical hierarchy; but the prisoner burst the bondage, and sought a home beyond the precincts of the Establishment. And although that Church still retains the body of that creed in her articles of faith, it is a *cold corpse* in her arms. And where the attempt has been made to plant the Calvinistic faith in the looser sands of Independency, one of two results has invariably followed—it has either endured but for a time, and been blown from the unpropitious soil by the blasts of error, or it has thrown its fibres abroad in the sands, and, by its power to produce *cohesion*, has transformed them into the fixed soil of substantial Presbyterianism. Nothing is more fully demonstrated by the history of the Church than this position; and an inspection of the philosophy of the case adds *strong corroboration*.

But besides the features of the kingdom of God already noted, we add, that it is a *federative system*. It recognizes the *unity* of the whole Church, and provides for its *practical exemplification* by a system of representation capable of extension to the whole earth, and of adaptation to all nations. As embodied in the constitution of our own Church, it realizes the grand idea, E PLURIBUS UNUM; and whilst, by a system of courts, rising from the parochial Presbytery to a General



Assembly, that may embrace representatives from all the earth, it unites the whole in one vast and harmonious organization, yet does it carefully guard against *centralism* and consolidation, by making the Presbyteries the *repositories* of authority, and by limiting the powers and prerogatives of the supreme counsel by a written constitution.

Such is the kingdom of God, in the form in which we receive it, and believe it to be revealed in the holy word—a *federative representative democracy*, with Jesus Christ as its ever-living Head and only Chief Magistrate. The type and *model* of all practicable civil republicanism, and the best adapted to secure the blessings of regulated liberty. It is a fact, conceded even by intelligent prelatists, that our happy and glorious civil institutions are but copies of the great republican model found in the Bible, and drawn out in the constitutions of the Presbyterian Churches. A distinguished United States Senator, and a prelatist, when acting as counsel in a church case, some years ago, had occasion to borrow from a legal friend a copy of our Form of Government. After examining it, he returned it, with the remark, "That, sir, is a remarkable book. It is a perfect system of representative government; its framers must have modelled it after the constitution of the United States." His friend smiled, took from his library an old Edinburgh edition of the Confession of Faith, and, placing it in the Senator's hands, quietly remarked, "The modelling was the other way—this old book was the model, the American constitutions are the copies." Chief Justice Tilghman, also a prelatist, bears the same testimony. The distinguished Bancroft, testifying from an opposite stand-point, yet with a candour that proves him a true philosopher of history, attributes the regulated liberty of this land chiefly to the influence of the Calvinistic element. And the testimony of the lamented Macaulay, as he traces the history of British liberty, is to the same effect.

In this we boast not, as if we were the authors of Calvinistic presbytery. Its authorship is with God. Nor is it a modern revelation, nor a new discovery. Even when of old, God personally governed his people Israel, the *mode* of administration was, in its main features, republican. The presbyters of Israel were the *chosen* and *ordained* representatives of the people.

The *theocracy* was a representative democracy! And when the people, following the example of heathen nations, sought the establishment of *monarchy*, God was displeased.

Such is the kingdom of God, as this Church has received it, and as her Board of Domestic Missions are striving to advance it throughout this land. Jesus is the glorious and Almighty King. Believers in Jesus are its free, and happy, and loyal citizens; the pure doctrines and ordinances of the religion of Jesus are its constitution. The law of God is the law of the kingdom; the remedial law, the gospel of God's grace is the Heaven-originated scheme through which the Spirit of Christ subdues rebellious men, and makes them justified, holy, and obedient subjects; whilst the *throne* and the *law* receive no detriment, but the one is *established*, and the other magnified and made honourable, by the obedience and death of the King himself. In the administration of this kingdom, "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other." By the *very process*, as we have shown, by which men are brought to be subjects of it, they are placed under the influence of principles and motives of the highest, holiest, and most conservative, and beneficent kind. Well might the angelic spectators of the birth of King Immanuel exclaim, "Glory to God in the highest!" &c.

This kingdom *ought* to come. It ought to be extended throughout the earth, and if there is a land upon earth that needs the thorough establishment of the kingdom of God in all her borders, that land is our own. I will go further, and say, that our country needs the thorough extension of the kingdom of God, in its scriptural form of CALVINISTIC PRESBYTERIANISM. The facts of our history, and of our present position before the country and the world, proclaim us the great *republican conservative* branch of the American Church. National in extent, national in our history, national in our sympathies and aims; embracing the whole country within our undivided pale; homogeneous in our governmental principles and forms with the civil institutions of the land; identified with the achievement of her independence, and with the rise and progress of her freedom and her greatness, may we not safely affirm, that no province of the kingdom of God seems quite so well



adapted to do a great work for America as the Presbyterian Church? Equally removed from the frigid forms and the grotesque domination of Prelacy on the one hand, and the unlimited democracy of Independency on the other, our system is favourable both to free discussion and free action, and to mature deliberation, and a wise and cautious progress. Giving prominence to *faith*, whilst we do not underrate *feeling*, our religion is more a religion of *principle* than of *impulse*. Accustomed to make the *word of God*, and not the sentiments and impulses of our own minds, the rule of judgment and of conduct, we are less likely to be borne hither and thither by the frothy currents of popular opinion. Making much of *faith*—faith in God, faith in his promises, and faith in the slow but sure progress of his kingdom, and its blessed principles, we are not in so much of a hurry as some other people. “He that *believeth* shall not make haste,” either to advance or flee. We are not impatient with the Lord because he adopts the plan of the *gradual abolition* of evil, and the gradual advancement of good. Believing that he has foreordained the diligent use of means by men, in order to the accomplishment of every good and great result, we are encouraged and urged, by this belief in foreordination, *diligently to use means*; and we do it, and leave results to God. We are content that he should produce, if he please, a gourd or a mushroom in a night, and a stalwart oak in a century. Hence, by the very principles of our system, and by the mental, spiritual, and economical training of our people, we are, as a religious society, adapted to a great work, that requires *business energy*, combined with *faith* and *patience*. Other wings of the sacramental host may be more rapid in their movements, and more impulsive in their assaults, but for steady, firm, unfaltering, well-sustained, and well-directed charges upon the ranks of the enemy of God, give me the staunch, and serried, and well ordered Presbyterian phalanx. Others have shown great heroism, and done good service to the glorious cause, as flankers and skirmishers; but in the broadly planned campaign, and on the wide-spread battle-field, where science, and discipline, and steady endurance are demanded, the *old guard* has ever proved, and will ever prove, the bulwark of the field and

the restorer of the battle! Other armies of the Master's kingdom have been distracted and divided, by questions that relate more to sectional civil policy than to religious truth; ours has preserved the unity of the spirit and of the body in the bond of peace, by wisely imitating the great Captain's example, and acting upon the maxim, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." *He* was unwilling to be entangled in questions of civil policy; so have we been. And whilst our testimony, upon all moral and spiritual subjects, is inscribed upon our banners, and flung to the breeze, to be read of all men, we have never forgotten, and God grant we never may forget, that we are a spiritual organization, for spiritual purposes; that we are subjects of a kingdom not of this world; that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; that our great mission is to "preach the gospel of the kingdom," to plant the mustard seed, to deposit the blessed leaven in the hearts of the people, and pray the God of means to make the one to grow, and the other to spread, and thus to offer and enact the prayer, "Thy kingdom come."

Let me not be misunderstood. Whilst I would have the Church kept strictly to her appropriate work, and held back from any unholy and profitless interference with the secular and civil interests of men, I would not hush her voice of counsel to her children, and of warning to sinners. It is her *privilege* to commend *good deeds* and *good enterprises*, in which her sons may engage, even when her own hand is not directly reached forth to do them. Indeed, it is her *mission* to counsel *all* men and *classes* of men, to carry their *Christian principles* into *every department* of human life. She may say to the publicans, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you," and to the soldiers, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages;" and to all the people, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." Jesus himself rebuked the spirit, even when shown by the beloved disciple, that would forbid the casting out of devils by any one "because he followeth not with us." The Church of God may commend to her people that which she believes



will be for God's glory, and man's salvation, even when it does not pertain directly to a Church effort. Even in the Church in heaven, the prayers and alms of Cornelius, still an outsider, came up as a memorial before God. And whilst, as a general thing, the household of faith should do their Father's business *themselves*, the very principles of her organization suggest the *propriety* and *necessity* of employing now and then servants that do not strictly belong to the family. And surely she may *delegate* special parts of that work to special *members of the household*, in such a way as a godly discretion may suggest. The great idea of *vicarious agency* and *representation* that pervades the entire constitution of the kingdom of God, an idea common to both covenants, furnishes the *life-spirit* of business efficiency. Men cannot get on without it. All business, secular or sacred, would come to a dead stand-still without it. The maxim of the law, *facit per alium facit per se*, is a Bible maxim—a *Calvinistic* maxim: and it is the great expeditor of business—it is an essential element of human progress: and to deny the use of it to the Church of Christ, is to deny her the right to apply her *own principles* to the details of duty; it is to compel her to go forth to battle in the armour of Saul, when the sling and the stones would far better suit her purpose.

We have dwelt so long upon the subject of the constitution and organization of the kingdom of God, that we can but glance at our second topic.

## II. THE OBLIGATION TO PRAY AND LABOUR FOR ITS ADVANCEMENT.

Nor need we detain you long; for, if the kingdom is what we have described it to be, this obligation will be sufficiently manifest. A rapid mention of the reasons why we should engage with heart and hand in this glorious enterprise, will close our discourse.

1. *God has commanded it.* "After this manner pray ye, Thy kingdom come." "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth more labourers into his harvest." "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Such explicit commands will be deemed sufficient by all who regard the authority

of God, to constitute the most solemn obligation to pray, and give, and labour in this cause.

2. Because the *kingdom of God*, as administered through the gospel, is the only form of administration adapted to a fallen race. Without an *atonement*, justice can do nothing but punish the guilty; with an atonement, justice can stoop to raise the fallen, and remit their sins. A reign of grace only can reach the root of evil, and, by changing the heart, dry up the fountain of crime. A kingdom of God, administered through grace, is the only one under which sinners can be saved. If, then, we are bound to care for the souls of men, and seek their salvation, we are under obligations to spread the gospel of the kingdom.

3. Because, as we have seen, the kingdom of God is the best government for men on earth. The King is infinite in all governmental qualifications. His administration is infallible. His laws *perfect, holy, just, good*. And when men truly obey them, they do it from *love*, and they are happy in obedience. They who are loyally and cheerfully obedient to the laws of this kingdom, need no other government. But even where these laws are not universally obeyed from the heart, they give force to civil government, and prove the safeguards of society. A godless commonwealth is an impossibility; and just in proportion as the principles and sanctions of Christianity are excluded from human jurisprudence, do the laws become powerless for good. Our dearest earthly rights, as well as our heavenly hopes, depend upon the coming of the kingdom of God. He is not a friend of liberty, and the rights of man, who opposes this kingdom—who encourages human legislators to repeal its laws, or who would banish the omniscient Witness from earthly courts, and abate, in the public conscience, reverence for the oath of God.

4. God's kingdom should be advanced, because it only is *enduring*. All other governments are temporary expedients adapted to a world of violence. This only is eternal, and adapted to the temporal condition and immortal destiny of man. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Other empires wax and wane—other thrones are reared and crumble—other dynasties are founded



and perish, “but unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!” A kingdom that ruleth over *all*—that links our globe and our race with other parts of the vast universe—that never shall end—that protects its subjects alike in their temporal interests and their eternal condition—such a kingdom ought to be advanced—men ought to pray and labour for its coming. And if he who betrays his country is guilty of *high treason*, methinks he who betrays the kingdom of our God, and imperils its interests, is guilty of *treason in the highest!*

Fathers and brethren of the General Assembly, and citizens of Zion’s kingdom, all—I feel that the last Assembly placed your unworthy speaker in a position of peculiar and solemn responsibility, in appointing him to plead before you the cause of Domestic Missions. Who is sufficient for such a position, and for such a task? In a few concluding words, “hear me for my cause!” It is the cause, not of the Board of Domestic Missions merely—they are but the Church’s arm, her instrument—it is the cause of the lonely, devoted, self-denying, often suffering missionary; who, in a hard and distant field, with hard fare—often in opposition to hard men, and amid hard trials—is, in our behalf, preaching the gospel of the kingdom. I plead for him; I plead for the delicate, and devoted, and often suffering partner of his toils and cares. She has seen better days, dare I say? no, never better days—for no days are better than those in which we suffer and toil for Christ; but she has seen days of ease, and comfort, and plenty in her father’s house—days when the refinements of life clustered around her girlhood’s path. But she has left all for Christ, and for souls, and to help to do our work. I plead for her—she ought not to have a monopoly of self-denial in this cause. Her noble husband’s heart ought not to be crushed, and unfitted for his work, by the consciousness that his scanty stipend will not permit him to relieve her from toil and privation to which she had been so unused! I plead for their children; they ought to be better clothed, and better educated. O! will a Church of the living God, a blood-bought Church, a wealthy, powerful Church, suffer her faithful missionary servants to struggle with difficulties that might appal the stoutest heart?

Will she run the fearful hazard of forfeiting the plaudit, "I was hungry and ye gave me meat; thirsty and ye gave me drink; naked and ye clothed me; sick and ye came unto me; for verily, inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me"?

I plead for our beloved country. If she is to be saved from impending perils, if the same influences that contributed to make her great, glorious, and free, are to continue operative, and preserve and transmit to the future our happy institutions, the Presbyterian Church must do a large share of the blessed work. And if the kingdom of God, in its maturest development and its freest and most effective form, is to be maintained in the old States, and sent with the rapid roll of population to the new, this Church and this Board of Missions must lead on the glorious enterprise. And what an enterprise! With a field washed by both oceans, and stretching from the lakes to the land of orange groves; a field rapidly augmenting in population, and in everything that makes the kingdom of God a first necessity; a field upon every part of which our Church commands respect, and is almost sure of a welcome:

"No line, nor latitude contracts our powers;  
But the whole boundless continent is ours."

With such a field before us, with such an open door, with resources adequate, and more than adequate, to do what our hands find to do, can this Church be guiltless if she falter and fail to meet her responsibilities, and accomplish her mission for her country? "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Power conferred, and opportunity afforded, constitute unavoidable responsibility. This Church has done much for this land; she has before her the most favourable opportunity of doing much more. O! let her be brought fully "up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" influences that are even now at work in the fell effort to *rend* and *ruin*.

I plead for the *salvation of our countrymen*. Even *Jesus*, who loved the *world* and shed his blood to redeem men of every nation, and who commanded his gospel to be preached



to *every creature*, offered it *first to his countrymen*. And Paul, whose mission was chiefly to the Gentiles, offered that gospel to the *Jew first*; and his heart's desire and prayer for Israel was that they might be saved. It is safe to follow such examples; and whilst we aim to flood the *earth* with the river of life, let us remember that our first duty is to America; let us pray, and give, and work for the conversion of our countrymen! But in asking that this may be done, and done with larger liberality, and livelier zeal, I feel that

I plead *also for the world*, for we cannot send *abroad* what does not abound at *home*. The American Churches, more perhaps than those of any other land, are responsible for the establishment of the kingdom of God in all the earth. God, in his providence, has given us favour in the eyes of the heathen. When the diplomacy of other nations fails to establish free intercourse and ready access, ours succeeds. Whilst other Christian nations are viewed with jealousy and dislike, we are received with confidence. Whilst the lion and St. George's cross, and the tri-colour, are hailed with suspicion, the banner of the stars and stripes is saluted with the heartiest welcome. The *world* is open to our commerce—the *world* is open to our missionaries. But we cannot send what we have not got; and unless the Board of Domestic Missions is well sustained by the prayers, the offerings, and the labours of our people, the men and the means for the foreign enterprise cannot be increased in the ratio demanded by the wants of the world. Our country and her Churches are solving social and religious problems for the race. God has placed us like a city on a hill, that cannot be hid; let faith and freedom fail in America, and a pall of despair will be thrown over the nations. Let faith and freedom advance towards the perfection of their glory in this great land; and hence their blessed light will radiate to all the earth. Our example, like the brazen serpent of Moses, will bid the oppressed nations look up and live. Let us hold it steadily up, and all the tribes of Adam will be won to freedom and to God!

What we need, my brethren, is not any radical or even material changes in the organizations of our Boards—it is wise to let well enough alone, till you are sure you can better it;

but what we need is more of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." We need more of the grace of sacrificing for the good of others. We need fuller knowledge of the kingdom of God, and livelier faith in all its blessed principles and provisions. We need to have the *whole kingdom of God preached* to our people; and especially that part of the constitution that relates to the *treasury department*, the *recruiting service* and the *commissariat*. There is a sinful ignorance of, and a morbid prejudice against, the *revenue laws* of the kingdom of God. The pulpit must explain and enforce these laws, and show that they are part and parcel of the *constitution* of the kingdom; and that it is *unconstitutional* to neglect or disobey them. The people must be taught that it is as completely a part of the Christian religion to *pay* as to *pray*: that he who neglects offerings to the Lord, proportionate to the measure in which the Lord has prospered him, neglects an essential part of practical piety, forfeits God's blessing, brings leanness upon his soul, and is the loser both in *grace* and *gain*: that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver, and that it is as absurd to expect the kingdom of God on earth to be ready, either for defence or for conquest, without *revenue*, as to expect it of one of the kingdoms of this world. Let all our ministers preach, and all our people learn and receive that part of the constitution of the kingdom of God which makes provision for its own maintenance and extension—let the twin graces, *love* and *liberality*, be cherished in every church and every heart, and every home, in our wide-spread body; let every minister, elder and deacon, make conscience of obtaining *some* offering, however small, for each of our Boards, from every member: and then will our Zion "arise and shine—her light will come, and the glory of her Lord will rise upon her—and nations shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising!"

THE END.